

Reserve Component Physical Training Program

The following information is provided for individuals in the USAR and the ARNG who have difficulty meeting the Army Physical Fitness Test standards. The staff of the U.S. Army Physical Fitness School (USAPFS) prepared the information. The USAPFS is responsible for developing the Physical Fitness Training Programs, researching the Army's physical fitness needs, and providing training support to the force.

All personnel in the active Army, the ARNG, and the USAR will take part in either collective or individual physical fitness training programs year-round (AR 350-41, Chapter). **Physical fitness is an individual responsibility for all soldiers regardless of component.** This is truly the case for USAR and ARNG soldiers whose collective training periods are spread throughout the training year.

This program is designed to allow soldiers to develop a minimum level of conditioning necessary to meet Army testing standards. The purpose of physical fitness testing is to give soldiers an incentive to stay in good physical condition and allow commanders a means of assessing the general fitness levels of their units. Fitness testing is designed to ensure the maintenance of a base level of physical fitness essential for every soldier in the Army, regardless of MOS or duty assignment (AR 350-41, Chapter 9). This program is not designed to develop a level of conditioning necessary to meet or exceed mission-related physical performance tasks.

Developing and maintaining a foundational level of fitness does not require fancy equipment, a complicated program, or a lot of time. You can improve your fitness level, health, and APFT score by performing calisthenics, running activities, and stretching for a period of as little as 30 minutes, 5-days per week. This program also offers the option of 45-60 minutes of training, 3-days per week.

In order for any program to be safe and effective, it must be followed as written. Exercise must be conducted regularly at the proper intensity to bring about the desired changes in the body. You should start this program at least 16 weeks before the APFT. Sedentary individuals will need even more time. Changes in the body occur gradually, so be patient and stick to the program. If you miss a workout for some reason, it's not the end of the world; just pick up where you left off with the next day's workout. However, if you miss a whole week of workouts, you will have to start the week over. If you lapse for more than a couple weeks, you should start at the beginning of the program. It doesn't matter how good or consistent your exercise program is if you don't also eat properly and get enough sleep.

Safety Considerations

If you have not been exercising on a regular basis, it is recommended that you talk to your family doctor before beginning this program. Complete the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire in Appendix D to identify any health or medical issues that might cause problems when an exercise program is begun. Also remember to start slow and to keep your body hydrated. A moderate amount of water will help your body function more effectively and prevent some injuries. Be aware of your environment and dress appropriately; do not exercise in climates that are extremely hot or extremely cold. Exercise with a buddy; it helps to motivate you and there will be someone there in the event of an injury. Although a little muscle soreness is to be expected when beginning an exercise program, do not aggravate any injuries by continuing to exercise under circumstances of pain or discomfort.